



THE TEXAS POLICY VOICE FOR HEALTHCARE AND BIOSCIENCE

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Greg Bonnen, M.D.
Chair, House Select Committee on Statewide Health Care Costs
Texas House of Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768

RE: Interim Charge 1

Dear Chairman Bonnen and Honorable Committee Members,

The Texas Healthcare and Bioscience Institute (THBI) is the Texas public policy voice for the healthcare and bioscience industry. Our membership consists of biopharmaceutical companies, research institutions, medical device companies, economic development entities and service companies providing unparalleled networking and synergy to effectively address the public policy needs of Texas' growing life sciences community.

The Texas life sciences industry is committed to expanding the boundaries of science by discovering, developing and delivering innovative and needed medications to patients. It is the patient that is the ultimate beneficiary of such advances. The membership of THBI is dedicated to creating an environment where such discoveries flourish and thrive.

As you are aware, our industry is working around the clock, racing for treatments and vaccines to stamp out the spread of COVID-19. At the same time, we are also helping lead the way, with groundbreaking, rapidly developing research that has allowed us to hold out collective hope for an end to this pandemic. To date there are more than 737 unique active compounds in development to fight COVID-19 of which 188 are vaccines, 198 are antivirals and 351 are treatments. *Biopharmaceutical innovators are leading the charge against this virus.*

Rising rates of chronic disease

The industry recognizes the need to connect the role that social factors play in the rising rates of chronic disease and poor health as we have seen the disproportionate effects COVID-19 has had among our minority populations. Our philosophy is this: if it does not extend lives; if it does not promote access to cures; if it limits the scope of discovery; it's not good policy. The industry has coalesced as a united front to promote health equity by specifically raising awareness around the need for greater community participation in clinical trials, enhancing clinical trial diversity and educating the greater public on vaccine safety and efficacy.



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Lack of transparency in the cost of health care services

It's the biopharmaceutical industry's mission to find treatments and it is also our responsibility to help patients access them. THBI believes prescription drug price transparency policies should strike a balance between promoting transparency across the entire pharmaceutical supply chain through reporting of meaningful, non-proprietary data while preserving pharmaceutical innovation and Texas' strong business environment. Beyond meaningful transparency, we encourage you to consider policies that would directly affect patients' out-of-pocket spending on medicines, such as ensuring manufacturer-provided rebates are passed on to patients at the pharmacy counter.

Currently, there are 900 plus patient assistance programs in the United States. I want to ensure that you are aware of the Medicine Assistance Tool (MAT), www.mat.org, an online search engine for many of the patient assistance resources that the biopharmaceutical industry offers. MAT helps patients, caregivers and health care providers learn more about the resources that are available to them so that they can make more informed health care decisions when it comes to the cost of prescription medicines.

We extend our sincerest gratitude for the opportunity to provide feedback and look forward to partnering with you during the 87th Legislative Session. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me directly at 512-708-8424 or at tk@thbi.com.

Sincerely,

Tom Kowalski
President & CEO